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THis Court doth deſire Dr. *Littleton* to print his Sermon, Preached at the *Guildhall-Chappel* on the 29th of *February* laſt, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

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[12.]

A SERMON

BEFORE

The Right Honourable

THE

LORD MAYOR

AND

The Right Worſhipful

THE

ALDERMEN

OF THE

City of London.

Preached on *Febr.* 29. $16\frac{79}{80}$, at *Guildhall-Chappel.*

By ADAM LITTLETON, *D.D.*
Prebend of St. Peters Weſtminſter, *and Chaplain in Ordinary to his* MAJESTY.

LONDON,
Printed by *S. Roycroft*, for *Rich. Marriott*, and are to be Sold by *Walter Kettleby* at the *Biſhops-Head* in St. *Pauls Church-yard*, 1680.

To the Right Honourable

Sr. *ROBERT CLAYTON,*

Lord MAYOR of *LONDON.*

My Lord,

AS Government hath been always own'd by All, who ever were truly Wiſe and Good, to be one of the greateſt Bleſſings, God hath vouchſafed to the Neceſſities of Mankind; ſo through the Wantonneſs or Peeviſhneſs of thoſe that are to be Govern'd, it is rendred ſometimes as Difficult a Province, as it is Uſeful and Neceſſary.

In

In this Sphere Your Lordſhip *hath acted with that Loyalty to the* KING, *that Zeal to Religion, and that Moderation to all ſorts of People, that You have fully acquitted Your ſelf to publick Approbation.*

That Wantonneſs, *I mentioned, proceeds from the abundance and ill uſe of Peace and Plenty. That other Cauſe of diſorder, which I named,* Peeviſhneſs, *ariſeth from any ſlight Apprehenſion of doubtful and dangerous Times: which may poſſibly be now our Caſe.*

In order to the ſatisfaction of ſuch Miſapprehenſions, I have deſigned this ſhort Diſcourſe; the Sum of which is to do our Duty, *and* to truſt God *with the Succeſs: which will certainly be the moſt Rational, as well as the moſt Chriſtian way of ſecuring every Man from thoſe wild Fears, we labour under.*

My

My Lord, *I dare not queſtion, but that That ſlender Acceptance, which this mean Sermon met with at its Delivery out of the* Pulpit, *that and much more it will find now in its Publication by Your* Lordſhips *Order from the* Preſs.

Your Lordſhips

moſt Humble and Obedient

Servant,

ADAM LITTLETON.

PSAL. XXXVII. 5.

Commit thy way unto the Lord, [or, *Roll thy way upon the Lord;*] *truſt alſo in him: and he ſhall bring it to paſs.*

IT hath been a conſtant Complaint almoſt ever ſince the World began, and that which hath prov'd a trouble not only to Vulgar Spirits, but hath given ſome temptation even to the Wiſe and the Good alſo; that whereas Juſtice requires, *ut Bonis ſit benè, Malis malè*, that it ſhould go *Well* with the *Good*, and *Ill* with the *Bad*; God ſometimes, by his providential Diſpenſations, if not orders, at leaſt ſuffers it to be quite otherwiſe: inſomuch that *Epicurus* and his Followers, upon this account utterly denied, that there was any ſuch thing as Divine *Providence*, to take care of things here below: which yet, from the very principles of Vertue and common Morality, the *Stoicks*, another ſort of Philoſophers, as ſtoutly

aſſerted and maintain'd, notwithſtanding this ſeeming Irregularity in its unequal diſtributions; which conſideration is ſtill further improv'd by *Chriſtian* Philoſophy into a ground of Belief of one of the main *Articles* of our Religion, *to wit*, a future State; and has been made uſe of as one great Argument and Aſſurance, beſide that of *Revelation*, to confirm our Faith of the laſt Judgment, of a Life after this, and of eternal Rewards.

This *Pſalm* up and down repreſents the *Caſe*, to wit, the flouriſhing condition of the Wicked to the great prejudice and hazard of Gods people; and ſuppoſing this might prove a Temptation to the Godly, to entertain ſuch unquiet apprehenſions, as *David* himſelf acknowledges elſewhere he had laboured under, till he went into the *Sanctuary*, that is, till he had conſulted with the Divine Oracles, and thence received ſatisfaction and eaſe; he perſwades us, in ſuch Inſtances, to confidence in God and patience in well-doing; and diſcovers the Eſtate of Pious and Ungodly men to be as different, not only in the World to come, but through Gods juſt Judgment many times even in this Life, as their Principles and Practices have been.

Pſ. 73. 17.

Theſe

These are the most considerable Subjects and Parts of this whole Composure; of which, because they lie scattered here and there, and intermixt with one another, (a thing usual in *Alphabetical* Writings, such as this is;) I shall not go about to present you with an exact *Analysis*, but fetch in the Royal Prophets sentiments and observations, as they will fall in kindly into the body of my Discourse, as we go along.

Indeed the Words, I have now read to you, are a compleat Abridgment of the whole *Psalm*, or rather a general *Aphorism* applied here to this particular Case, by which It, as all others of like nature, ought to be stated and resolv'd. For if we are in the general account of Piety, upon all occasions of *Danger* or *Distress*, of *Doubt* or seeming *Desertion*, to *commit our way unto the Lord*, and *to trust in him*; then it will behove us no less, in this particular Case of prosperous Wickedness and oppressed Piety, to have the same deference to God and confidence in him: and God, who is never wanting to those who trust in him, will also, in this Case, upon our meek submission to his *Will*, and faithful adherence to his *Word*, support and relieve us, at least do that

which ſhall be beſt for us; he will, in his due time, according to his good pleaſure, if we *commit* our ſelves and our ways to him, and *truſt* in him, *he will bring it to paſs.*

There are then in this piece of Scripture *three* things to be taken notice of; the *one* Implied or ſuppoſed, the other *two* Expreſſed and plainly ſet down.

1. Here is the ſuppoſal of a *Caſe*, of a doubtful and dangerous condition; for ſo the *committing* of a Concern to another, and truſting his Wiſdom and Fidelity with the management of it, implies, that a man doth not think himſelf ſafe without ſuch a devolution and confidence.

2. A *Direction*, how we are to behave our ſelves in a caſe of ſuch doubt and danger; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, &c.*

3. An *Aſſurance* of good ſucceſs upon our ſo doing: *and he will bring it to paſs.*

Of theſe Severals I ſhall treat with all honeſt plainneſs, the Thing it ſelf being of an univerſal uſe and influence, wherein all Perſons, all Intereſts are concerned; that I may take in all, even the meaneſt capacities.

I. For

I. For the *Caſe* ſuppoſed; it is but ſo in the *Text*, but in the *Pſalm* it ſelf it is ſufficiently expreſſed and fully repreſented.

The *Pſalm*, to give a ſhort account of it, is a perſwaſive to Contentment and Satisfaction with *Providence*, which permits wicked men to flouriſh for a while; inforced with ſundry *Reaſons*, eſpecially this, That Godly mens condition is however much better than theirs, even at the preſent, not to ſpeak of hereafter. So it begins,

Verſe 1. *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of Evil doers, neither be thou envious againſt the workers of Iniquity.* He means, we ſhould not fret or repine to ſee them in ſuch a proſperous condition: for ſo 'tis expreſly ſaid *verſ.* 2. *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of him who proſpereth in his way; becauſe of the man who bringeth wicked devices to paſs.* Be not troubled at the proſperity of wicked men and their ſtrange ſucceſsfulneſs, if it ſhould ſo be, and as it often happens.

And ſo he brings it in as an Obſerve of his own towards the later end, *verſ.* 35. *I have ſeen the wicked in great power, and ſpreading himſelf like a green Bay-tree; yet he paſſed away.*

And indeed were this all, that Wicked men only

only grew great, acquired power and wealth, and did no hurt with it to others; this might well enough be born with, we ſhould not need to fret our ſelves at them, or to envy them upon this ſcore: but when they abuſe thoſe Advantages to the danger of the Church and the deſtruction of Gods Servants, this muſt needs affect, and go near to the heart of all thoſe who are toucht with any care of Gods honour and the concerns of Religion. And thus is it here,

Verſe 12. *The wicked plotteth againſt the juſt, and gnaſheth upon him with his teeth.* They lay deſigns of Treachery and Miſchief, as having a natural Antipathy againſt thoſe perſons, who out of Conſcience dare not believe as they believe, nor do as they do; as the Wiſeman in the ſecond Chapter of his *Wiſdom* has elegantly ſet it forth. *Come*, ſay they, *let us lie in wait for the Righteous; becauſe he is not for our turn; and he is clean contrary to our doings. He upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and objecteth to our infamy the tranſgreſſions of our Education. He profeſſeth to have the knowledge of God; and he calleth himſelf the Child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold; for his life is*

not

not like other mens, his ways are of another faſhion. We are eſteemed of him as Counterfeits; he abſtaineth from our ways as from filthineſs, &c. What words could more graphically expreſs that deviliſh Animoſity, which thoſe of *Rome* have againſt the *Engliſh* and other Reformed Churches?

Well! from Conſult they proceed to Action.

Verſe 14. *The wicked have drawn out the ſword, and have bent their bow, to caſt down the poor and needy, and to ſlay ſuch as be of a right converſation.* They make their bloody preparations to ruin thoſe who lived quietly by them, and truſting to their ſtrength and policy, are forward to venture upon any thing, be it never ſo unlawful, that may advantage their Cauſe, againſt thoſe who reſolve not to uſe any unlawful means, though for their own Preſervation.

And if they cannot do it by Whole-ſale, in Maſſacres; they are content by Retail to vent their cruel malice upon ſingle perſons.

Verſe 32. *The wicked watcheth the Righteous*; he dogs him up and down; *and ſeeketh occaſion to ſlay him*; that is, he uſes all arts and attempts of Treachery to inſnare and trepan him.

This is the *Caſe*, as it is here put.

And

And that this hath been the condition of the *Church* and People of God, throughout all Ages, ever ſince there was an Enmity put betwixt the Seed of the *Woman*, that is, Chriſt and all true Believers; and the Seed of the *Serpent*, that is, Wicked men, who act under the Devil as his Inſtruments; is ſo apparent from all *Church-Hiſtory*, that I need not trouble you with a collection. St. *Auſtin* in his Book of the *City of God* hath, as I remember, given a fair account of this matter at large. Thus *Cain* ſlew *Abel* upon the ſcore of Religion, becauſe his Brothers offering was accepted, and his own was not: *Iſhmael* the Son of the Bond-woman, perſecuted *Iſaac* the Child of the Promiſe; and *Eſau* hated *Jacob* and vow'd his death, becauſe he was better beloved of God and had got the Bleſſing from him.

And for this reaſon the *Iſraelites*, Gods ſelect People, were deteſted by all the Heathen and Idolatrous Nations, that dwelt round about them; becauſe they had a different way of Worſhip from them all, wherewith they worſhipped the true God according to his own Appointment. And yet it pleaſed God at

ſeveral

ſeveral times to give up this People of his for their ſins into the hands of their Enemies, the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Syrians*, *Babylonians*; and upon their Repentance to work for them great and ſignal Deliverances.

And thus, to go no further with the deduction, hath ſtood the Caſe betwixt us and our *Popiſh* Adverſaries ever ſince the Reformation. —*Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, may* our *Iſrael now ſay. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, yet they have not prevailed againſt me*, Pſal. 129. 1, 2. They have by Gods providence and our own indulgence been ſuffered to live amongſt us in better condition, than perhaps other Subjects have; free from thoſe *Penalties* the Law had impoſed upon them, and quit of thoſe chargable *Duties*, that lie upon others; and by this means have had the opportunity of amaſſing great Wealth, and carrying on the *Catholick-Cauſe*, as they call it; till at laſt they were grown ripe, as they fancied, by the contrivance of their Prieſts and a kind of univerſal Combination of the whole Party at home and abroad, for the Execution of their great Deſign, which God in his Mercy *hath* prevented, or I hope *will* prevent; nay certainly

will, if we, as we ought to do, *commit* our ſelves and our ways unto him.

My buſineſs is not to blow the Coals, or to raiſe thoſe popular Jealouſies, which are too apt of themſelves, upon occaſion, eſpecially if they meet with any incouragement, to break out into open flames; but rather to allay thoſe irregular heats. Only I could not but take notice of a matter of fact, which is ſo notorious; and I muſt avow, (for why may I not? it being the ſenſe of the Nation:) that there's no one, who has any Piety to *God*, any Loyalty to his *Sovereign*, in whoſe Sacred life all our Intereſts are involved; any Love to his *Country*, or any true care of *himſelf*: I ſay, there is no good *Proteſtant* or true *Engliſh*-man, but muſt needs as verily believe the late damnable Conſpiracy of the *Papiſts* againſt us, as he does heartily deteſt it; and be truly ſenſible of the danger we were in, and of Gods Mercy in the Diſcovery of it.

This then being a *Caſe* not only ſuppoſed, but publickly declared; the next thing, which is to be the main of my Meditations, is to ſhew, how we are to behave our ſelves, when we are thus beſet with Enemies, that profeſs a *Religion*, whoſe *Principles* are made up of Super-

Superſtition and Tyranny, and whoſe *Practices* have been always as full of Treachery and Cruelty. For that is the true Scope and Purport of this both *Pſalm* and *Text*, to adviſe in what manner the People of God ought to demean themſelves under ſuch perillous and afflictive Circumſtances. This is the ſecond part.

II. The *Direction* or Counſel the *Pſalmiſt* gives upon the *Caſe*, which ſeems to be two-fold, as being delivered in two Forms of words; but is indeed much at one: for ſo *rolling our ſelves* or *our way upon the Lord*, is in the language of the *Pſalms* the ſame thing as *truſting* in him. However for Diſtribution ſake, I ſhall conſider thoſe Expreſſions ſeparately and apart. And

Firſt, For *committing our way unto the Lord*, 1.
though it may be taken to ſignifie the ſame as *caſting our burthen* upon him, *Pſal.* 57. and caſting our care upon him, as St. *Peter* hath it; 1 Pet. 5. 7.
yet as *Way* doth in Scripture-uſe denote *Vitæ inſtitutum*, the courſe of life, the method and order of our Converſation; I may be allowed to take it in ſomewhat a different Notion, ſo as to comprehend under it theſe *three* things.

An intire *Obedience* to the *Word* of God, as the Rule of our actions.

A meek *Submiſſion* to the *Will* of God, which governs human Affairs. And

A *regular Walking* in the *Duties* of our *particular Calling*; leaving the reſt, as things which we are not immediately concerned in, to God Almighty's diſpoſal.

2. *Secondly*, *Truſting in God* imports theſe particulars:

A fiducial *Reliance* upon his *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs* in the care and conduct of our Perſons, and of all our Concerns.

A Declaration of that our dependance upon him in earneſt and frequent *Prayer*.

And withal honeſt *Endeavours* of our own for our *Preſervation*, in the uſe of all lawful Means; holding our ſelves ſtill in that Station wherein God hath placed us, and leaving the Event to him.

That theſe *Interpretations* are proper and natural, I ſhall, as I go, briefly make out from the body of the *Pſalm*.

I. *Commit thy way unto the Lord* is a Rule, as I ſaid before, of general uſe, to quiet the minds of men, and to ſecure them either from their

their *Fears* or under their *Troubles*, whatever they may be, *Temporal* or *Spiritual*, *Perſonal* or *National*; particularly, as it is here limited, to fortifie and bear up the Spirits of pious perſons againſt the apprehenſion or actual oppreſſion of *proſperous Wickedneſs*. And that is,

1. That they do carefully *obey* God according to his *Word*, which he hath appointed for the Rule of our actions; by doing what he hath there commanded, and by avoiding all known ſin: and this will certainly draw after it the divine *Protection* and all manner of Bleſſings.

So *verſ.* 27. *Depart from evil and do good, and dwell for evermore.* This is the beſt courſe, any man can take, either for this World or the next; whereas *Evil doers*, on the one hand or the other, be they of what profeſſion or denomination they will, we are told *verſ.* 9. *ſhall be cut off* and *rooted out* by ſome ſignal Vengeance, or untimely Exciſion.

Again, *verſ.* 4. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord*; let it be thy great delight and ſatisfaction, and thy main deſign, to ſerve and to pleaſe him; *and he will give thee thy hearts deſire.*

And thus *verſ.* 30. in a fuller account. *The mouth of the righteous ſpeaketh Wiſdom, and his*

his tongue talketh of Judgment. The Law of his God is in his heart: all his thoughts and discourses are busied about Gods Word, and his own Duty; and this indeed is true saving *Wisdom*, and of him it is there said, that *none of his goings shall slide*; he stands upon sure ground.

And this we find laid down for a Maxim in the 38*th* verse, according to our reading in the *Church-Office*; and that agreeably to some ancient Translations: *Keep innocence, and take heed to the thing that is right; for that shall bring a man Peace at the last.*

On the contrary for a man, by a designed deliberate Disobedience, to go out of Gods way, is to put himself out of his Protection; and he that would save his *Soul*, his *Life*, his *Fortunes*, or whatever it be, by doing against Gods Commands will find, that he takes the readiest course to lose them.

2. That they meekly *submit* to the *Will* of God, in his Providential Administrations. As there is a *will* of his *Commands*, so there's a *will* of his *Decrees*. To *that* we are bound to pay an *active* Obedience, to *this* a *passive*. By *this* He governs the World, by *that* We ought to govern our selves. *That* Will of his is contain'd

tain'd in *Scripture*; *this* laid forth in *Providence*.

I know, there were a ſort of people, that made great uſe of *Providence*, and governed themſelves by it; making *Scripture* it ſelf ſubſervient to it, and concluding any thing, were it never ſo bad, lawful, if it were but ſucceſsful. But this was no fair uſe of *Providence*, nor was it a right method to expound *Scriptures* according to *Providences*, as they were wont to do; but on the contrary to interpret *Providence* by *Scripture*. For God many times by his *Providence* permits thoſe Evils to have effect, the doing of which he hath in his *Word* forbidden. As then the *Evil of Sin* cannot be juſtified by Providence, ſo the *Evil of puniſhment*, which Providence at any time brings upon us, is to be ſubmitted to; which the Prophet calls the *accepting of our Puniſhment*.

Where this meek *Submiſſion* is, there will be no *Fretting*, no Repining or Murmuring, but a patient Attendance. This we meet with in the front of the Pſalm; *Fret not thy ſelf*, do not vex and chaſe and *heat thy ſelf*, as it is in the *Original*: and it is further explain'd *verſ.* 7. *Reſt in the Lord*, or *Be ſilent to the Lord*, make no complaints, *and wait patiently for him*; *do not fret* or *grieve at the man that doth after evil Counſels*:

ſels: as if he ſhould have ſaid; Have patience a while, and thou'lt have reaſon to admire and applaud Gods Wiſdom and Juſtice, and his Mercy too in thoſe worſt of his Diſpenſations, which now thou art too apt to be troubled at.

It was good advice *Gamaliel* gave, *Act.*5.39. and it took; that if a *Counſel or a Work be of God*, it cannot be overthrown; and to oppoſe it is *to fight againſt God*; which who do, they make to themſelves a great Enemy and are like to have but little peace. *But the Meek*, as it is *verſ.*11. *ſhall inherit the Earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in abundance of Peace.*

3. That they *keep* orderly *to the duties of their* own *Station*, and leave other things out of their Sphere to God and to their Superiours, to take care of.

And this is a Conſequent of that *Meekneſs*, we ſpoke of *verſ.*8. *Ceaſe from anger, forſake wrath*; do not be troubled, or diſcontented: *fret not thy ſelf in any wiſe to do evil*, or, as we read, *fret not thy ſelf, elſe ſhalt thou be moved to do evil*; do not be tranſported with Paſſion, ſo as to go out of the Road of thy Duty, and to venture upon things that do not concern thee, that no way belong to thee.

And

And it is alſo an Evidence of *Truſting in God*, as it is *verſ.* 3. *Truſt in the Lord and be doing good*; thy beſt and wiſeſt courſe will be to hold thee to God, and to order thy ſelf according to his will, by doing all the good thou canſt in that place, wherein he has ſet thee, and whatever the Temptation may be, do not fall off to Evil irregular courſes; *and ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed:* God will then provide for thy ſecurity and thy comfortable ſubſiſtence.

And this he lays down in a Propoſition, *verſ.* 23. *The ſteps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way*; that is, If his ſteps be ſo ordered, that his Converſation be conformable to Gods Will and Direction, then God will delight in his way; he will be pleaſed and kindly accept of him.

However *be not ſo envious againſt the workers of Iniquity*, as to emulate them, to be tempted to do like them, to take the ſame courſe as they do, or to joyn with them, becauſe thou ſeeſt them proſper, and to commit Wickedneſs and to do evil alſo, as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt has render'd that place.

There are ſome who out of a tenderneſs of apprehenſion imagine, they cannot be ſafe

from *Popery*, without running into the other extreme of *Schiſm*, (which is, as the Apoſtle ſets it, *to abhor Idols and commit Sacriledge*) and yet are ready enough to take up the ſame Principles as *Papiſts* have, and to do the ſame things as *Papiſts* do.

The *Papiſts* call us *Hereticks*, and upon that ſcore think they can deſign or act nothing againſt us, but what the cauſe of *Religion* and the advantage of *holy Church* will make good. Let not us be ſo far *Hereticks*, as to do like them, and to juſtifie their *Principles* and *Practices*, by owning them our ſelves. *Ye know not*, ſays Chriſt, *of what ſpirit ye are*, when his Diſciples would have had him called for fire from Heaven. It is no *Chriſtian* Spirit, no *Evangelical* temper, this.

It is however a known Rule and generally approv'd in mens Practice, *Vim Vi*; to repel *force* by force, and to ſupplant *fraud* with fraud; but *Chriſtianity* ſure will not allow of this, telling us that *Vengeance* is Gods Prerogative, and that the beſt way of Revenge is *to overcome Evil with Good.*

So much for the *firſt* part of the *Advice.*

The

II. The *other* part of this Head is to *truſt in God*; to depend upon him, to make our Applications to him, and what we may lawfully do of our ſelves towards our own ſafety, not to be over-ſollicitous about it, but to leave the event of it to him, who will never forſake them or leave them deſtitute, that thus truſt in him. And this implies

1. A *fiducial Relyance* upon his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; which is that St. *Peter* adviſes; *Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* And whom can we better truſt than God, in all our Affairs, in all our Concerns? for *if he be for us, who can be againſt us?*

And indeed that is one main deſign of Gods, in letting the Churches Enemies prevail over her at any time, in ſuffering his People to fall ſometimes into danger or diſtreſs, beſides our *Amendment* and *Trial*, to drive us to a cloſer *Dependance* upon himſelf, and to unhinge us from all ſecular Confidences.

Now this *Relyance* includes in it all the three Chriſtian *Graces*; an Adheſion of *Faith*, an Aſſurance of *Hope*, and an intire Reſignation of Mind and Fortunes, which is the Complyance of *Charity*.

2. An Acknowledgment of th[illegible] our Relyance upon him by the constant and earnest Addresses of our *Prayers* to him. For *Prayer* is the condition of receiving; 'tis the *Key of David*, that sets Heaven wide open for the letting down all manner of Blessings, especially those of Preservation and Deliverance. *He shall call upon me, and I will deliver him.* And this *Jonas* owned, when he was in the belly of the Whale, with weeds wrapt about his head; whose discharge was immediately ordered by God upon his Prayer; and for a Document to us all, he tells us there, that *They who observe lying vanities*, those who take ill courses and use unlawful means to save themselves; such *forsake their own Mercy: for Salvation is of the Lord.*

3. Nor yet doth Prayer, which seeks Salvation from the Lord, exclude our own *Endeavours*, and the use of all lawful *Means* for the procuring our own Safety. *Ministers* may and must Preach and Pray for't; and *Magistrates* in the several circles of Society act in order to it, and every *common Person* may one way or other be in his place instrumental for the good of the whole Body, whereof he is a Member.

I say,

I ſay, *in his place*; for no man ought to go without Commiſſion out of the bounds of his Calling; be his Intention to the Publick never ſo good.

When the *Ark* upon *Davids* order was to be removed, and the Oxen that carried it, ſtumbled and jolted it, *Uzzah*, who was one of the Drivers, without doubt out of a good intention, put forth his hand to hold it up. But he was for this his raſh attempt ſmitten and died in the place, to the great ſurprize and affrightment of *David* himſelf, who now ſtumbled, as much as the Oxen had done before, that he knew not how to behave himſelf: nor dared he to bring it home to him, as queſtionleſs he had at firſt intended.

Suppoſe our *Ark*, the *Church* of God among us, ſhould totter, it is not for every Cart-driver to offer his helping hand; or if the Veſſel of *State* ſhould bulge and ſwag from ſide to ſide, it is not for every private perſon to take upon him the place of Steersman. *Scripture is not of private Interpretation*; nor ought the Law, or the Affairs of *State* and Myſteries of *Government* to be ſo neither.

We read in *Ezek.* Ch. 10. of a *Wheel* within a *Wheel*, that is, I ſuppoſe (for I do not take upon

upon me to be an Interpreter of Prophecies,) the *Church* within the *State*. It is ſaid there, that *the Wheels went along, but they did not turn*, they only went as the Head gnided them, that is, the *Cherub*; (for the four *Cherubs* had each his Wheel) and the *Cherub* was a ſign of Gods Majeſtatick preſence. The *Moral* is plain. We are not to turn theſe *Wheels*, but let them go as the *Cherub* directs them. Beſides, theſe Wheels themſelves, it is ſaid, were *full of eyes*, ſo that they could ſee which way they went, and did not perform a blind obedience to the *Cherub* neither. What may we gather from hence?

We muſt let God and his *Cherubs*, his Vicegerents, govern the World, and in Caſes of doubt and danger, refer our ſelves to the Prudence and Authority of our lawful *Superiours*, whoſe Buſineſs it is and their great Concern too, to look after theſe things, for they have greater ſtakes to loſe than we Inferiours have.

But now ſee our Unhappineſs? Every body nowadays ſets up for a *State-mender*, every Company of ordinary perſons, wherever they meet, ſo manage their Diſcourſes, as if they were a *Committee of Council* to regulate the Affairs of *Religion* and *Government*. But alas! this

this is not the way to *mend* the Matter or to *order* our Concerns, but rather to run us into further Diſtractions and Diſorders.

III. And thus I have diſpatcht the *ſecond* general Head; I come to the *third* and laſt, the *Aſſurance of ſucceſs*, if we follow this Advice, which is, that *God will bring it to paſs*. How? why, even by his common Providence. How did he reſtore our Religion after Queen *Maries* ſhort Reign? How did he bring back our *King*, our *Laws* and *Liberties* after the late *Uſurpation*? The Wheels of *Church* and *State* mov'd, as the Heavenly *Cherubs* guided them, without turning, without almoſt the help of man, at leaſt without any Violence or Bloodſhed. Further, we may be aſſured, that whoſoever ſhall attempt to re-introduce *Popery* hither, does but go about to build up the Walls of *Jericho*. God Almighty will take care of us, if we be not wanting to our ſelves, if we but *commit* our ſelves to him.

This *Aſſurance* is made out in theſe particulars:

1. As to the *Wicked*, ſuch as certainly our *Adverſaries* are; for the Laws of God and Man condemn their Practices.

Their

Their flouriſhing *Condition* is but ſhort-liv'd; For *they ſhall ſoon be cut down like the graſs, and wither,* or *fade away as the green herb.*

And for their miſchievous *Deſigns* and wicked *Attempts*, God can by ſtrange and wonderful ways diſcover, (as he hath done) their helliſh *Plots*; he can blaſt and defeat their ungodly *Projects*; he can weaken their Power, or deny them the opportunity of acting their intended *Miſchiefs*; nay, which we muſt not deny to the worſt of men, he can, (and I heartily pray, he may) change their *Wills*, alter their *Minds*, and turn their *Hearts*; at leaſt, he can by his Providence or his Grace abate their *Pride* and aſſwage their *Malice*, (which put them upon theſe wicked execrable Practices) as well as by his Power confound their *Devices.*

2. And then as to the *Pious*, thoſe who *commit their way to God and truſt in him*, he will either protect them *from* Danger, or preſerve them *in* it, or ſupport them *under* it, and at laſt give them a good iſſue *out of* it; beſides thoſe everlaſting Retributions, which will infinitely tranſcend all the momentany afflictions of this Life.

And

And all these several *Instances* I might furnish with *Proofs* out of the *Psalm* it self, and back them with terrible *Threats* on one side, and comfortable *Promises* on the other; but that I fear I should far exceed my Time and tire your Patience.

Only as to the *Issue* of such Trials, let me accommodate to our purpose a passage or two out of the Story of that *Shipwrack*, described at large *Act.* 27. wherein St. *Paul* was concern'd. It was a great blessing to the rest to have *him* in their Company.

When the Storm arose, he tells them, they should not have left *Creet*; there they might have rode safe. 'Tis our Case; we have too many of us quit our Establishments: had we continued there, were we united among our selves, *Rome* durst not attack us. Our Separations and Divisions have laid us open, and given our Enemies the advantage against us. I wish we could but unite in the common Interest of *Protestants*: for there is none of those, that separate from the *Church*, but are fond of that *Name* still; though 'tis to be feared of some of them, that by the cunning Insinuation of those jugling *Priests*, that have crept

in amongſt them, they have loſt much of the *Thing*.

The Storm increaſing, they are fain to lighten the *Ship* of her lading, and throw away her tackle and furniture, and let her drive. However *Paul* aſſures them of their Lives, if they will be ruled, though the Veſſel were to miſcarry. The *Sailers* hearing that, would have got off in the long-Boat, and left the reſt to ſhift. That *Paul* hinders and obliges them to truſt God as well as the reſt; for their deſerting the *Danger* would have been probably, (as I underſtand the Story) the flinging up the *Deliverance*.

On the other hand the *Souldiers* were as *rude* as the others *fearful*, and are as forward now to cut the poor Priſoners throats, as they were a while ago to cut the Boat-ropes; for which their only pretence was, that they might prevent their Eſcape by killing them, who poor Souls expected every minute to be drown'd. This Storm was allayed by the good natur'd *Centurion*.

Thus you ſee there was a Tempeſt *within*, as well as *without*; and there are two ſorts of People to raiſe it, the *Fearful* and the *Boiſtrous*. This Storm *within* being appeaſed, the Storm *without*

without did them the leſs hurt; for they all eſcaped with their Lives to ſhoar. Whatever we fear from our *Popiſh* Adverſaries; may we, I pray God, ever be quiet and at Peace among our ſelves.

Then let *Euroclydon* blow, let the *Romiſh* Synagogue act with all the ſpite and malice, with all the Craft and Force, that Hell can furniſh her with, againſt the beſt of *Churches*; though our Hull ſhould by Gods juſt Permiſſion loſe her Tackle and be put a drift, I ſhould not altogether deſpair.

And I doubt not, but we have *Magiſtrates* and others, of St. *Pauls* ſpirit and the good *Centurions* temper, who will by their *Authority* and *Advice* hinder and prevent thoſe *Dangers* and *Diſorders*, which the *fear* of ſome and the *fury* of others among our ſelves may otherwiſe bring upon us; which, I ſay, weak Apprehenſions and ungrounded *Jealouſies* on one hand, or boiſtrous *Paſſions* and turbulent Humors on the other hand, may ingage us in. For though every one be obliged to have a *Zeal* for his *Religion*, for his *Country*, nay for his own *Intereſt*; yet if that *Zeal* tranſport us to act irregularly; if it be not a *Zeal according to Knowledge*, according to Duty, we do

but Chriſten *Frenzy* and wild *Rage* by the name of *Zeal*; and what our *Adverſaries* have all along done and ſtill do, juſtifie and ſanctifie *Villany*, by intitling it to the Cauſe of *Religion*: which is all one, as if we would deſign to liſt *Satan* and his black Fiends into Chriſts *Militia*, and fetch Auxiliaries from Hell *to fight the Lords battles.*

After all, may ſome ill-minded one ſay, that I have all this while been perſwading you to ſtand ſtill and ſuffer your ſelves to be wheedled into common ruin. No; I did at firſt ſuppoſe our *Danger*, and I have been offering the beſt *Advice* that Scripture affords, how we may be ſafe. For I have throughout the whole Diſcourſe taken *David* along with me, a man after Gods own heart; (for ſo 'tis in the Title ſaid to be *a Pſalm of David*) and in his words have delivered the *Exhortation*, that you would *truſt in God*, and *be patient in well-doing*; nor have I denied our own *Endeavours* too in the uſe of *lawful means.*

And ſuch kind of *Counſel* you will find every where ſcattered throughout the whole *Book of Pſalms*; a Book fit to be daily peruſed by all pious perſons, eſpecially in dubious and dangerous times. But

But then from *Scripture* they will appeal to the *Law of Nature*, and will tell us, that a man is obliged to do any thing, all he can, to preſerve himſelf, and that every thing in that Caſe becomes *ipſo facto* lawful.

Self-preſervation, it is true, is one of the greateſt and tendereſt Concerns, that *Nature* has; who has by ſecret and vigorous *Inſtincts* taught every Creature to provide for its Safety and to fly Danger.

But how, to give an *Inſtance*, does the little *Brood*, when they ſee a *Bird of prey* hovering over their head, ſeek to preſerve themſelves, but by taking ſhelter under the *Dams* wings? a *Metaphor*, the *Pſalmiſt* oft makes uſe of, when he ſpeaks of *Divine Protection*; as where he ſays, *Hide me under the ſhadow of thy wings, till theſe calamities be overpaſt.* Whereas ſhould the ſilly Creatures take wing and flutter about, they would, inſtead of ſaving themſelves, give their Enemy the advantage of making his ſtoop upon them.

Further, *Religion*, to which the very Reſentments of *Nature* are to give place, hath inſtructed us, that even *Self* is not to be preſerv'd by unlawful means. For *Evil is not to be done*, whatever *Good may come of it.*

Beſides,

Beſides, which is the ground of our very Chriſtianity, our bleſſed Lord hath made *Self-denial* the Character and Badge of his Religion. *He that will be my Diſciple*, ſays he, *let him deny himſelf and take up his Croſs, and follow me:* and *He that loves father or mother, houſe or land, or life it ſelf more than me, is not worthy of me.* Nor do I ſee, how this *Self-denial* is any way reconcileable with *Self-preſervation*, in that ſenſe as ſome people take it; as if it were lawful for a man to do any thing, though never ſo *ſinful*; to take any courſe, though never ſo *unlawful*, to preſerve himſelf. This way of preſerving our ſelves may indeed make us *Gnoſticks* or *Hobbiſts* or *Libertines*, but cannot truly denominate us *Chriſtians*.

When all is done, 'tis the far better and the more eligible of the two, to *ſuffer* evil, than to *do* it. And this ſuffering condition, be it as it will, will have much more of *comfort* and *ſecurity* in it too, than any ſinful *compliance* or wicked *oppoſition* can have.

Theſe Directions then of *doing our duty* and *truſting in God*, are the beſt and only means of ſecuring our ſelves againſt thoſe Dangers, our *Enemies* threaten us with. For if we act like them, and make no more Conſcience of

of uſing *unlawful means* to *preſerve* our ſelves, than they have done to *deſtroy* us; if we ſhall be found alike *Evil-doers* and *Tranſgreſſors* as they are, though in a different way; we muſt expect from an impartial God the ſame Doom, as is in time to paſs upon them, to be *cut off* and *rooted out*; when on the contrary *the Meek-ſpirited ſhall inherit the Earth*: and thoſe who *truſt in the Lord* and continue *doing good* and minding their own duty, *ſhall* by ſo doing *dwell in the Land, and verily they ſhall be fed*; they ſhall be preſerved, maintained and provided for; and *the end of the Upright-man ſhall be peace*; and *the ſalvation of the Righteous ſhall be from the Lord*, who will *help them, and deliver them from the wicked, and ſave them, becauſe they truſt in him*; and thoſe who *depart from evil and do good ſhall dwell for evermore*; they ſhall live happily, they and their Poſterities, in this World, and ſhall be Bleſſed in the World to come to all Eternity. *Amen.*

FINIS.

READER,

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